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## From smoke to bad fish: DTU students invent new uses for sensor technology

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By [Lisbeth Lassen](#)

A sensor that can register smoke from a fire can also be used to register even the faintest odour of bad fish. This is what a team of students behind the recently started business, Fishent, discovered.

Their idea and business model were elected as the winner of Spin Out Day Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May, and as part of the prize the team received 50.000 DKK and a stay at Berkeley University to participate in an innovation camp this summer.

### Many applications for sensor technology

Can you use the sensor technology from a smoke detector for other purposes? The team of students behind Fishent were asked this question as part of their assignment at the course Innovation and Product Development, a question they answered by developing a prototype to be used at fish auctions. When you insert a box of fish into it, the sensors detect and measure the fish odour and the software estimates the quality of the fish. The team has developed their own software for analyzing the data that the sensors collect. This evaluation of the fish quality ends up with a label with a number indicating how many days the fish will stay fresh.

The course Innovation and Product Development is an MSc course at DTU, where teams of students develop and start new businesses on the basis of patents and new technology. Each spring, the course is finished by Spin Out Day, an event where all teams present their ideas and business models for representatives from the trades and industries. Associate Professor and Innovation Coordinator Thomas Howard is responsible for the course, and Jakob Bejbro Andersen also teaches at the course.

### Solving a problem for the fishing industry

The recently started business has already received an enthusiastic feedback from the fish industry. An important issue is how to make a precise evaluation of the shelf life of the fish. This depends on how long ago the fish were caught, but also how well the fish has been stored before the auction. The longer shelf life the fish has left the more value it has for the dealers – so a precise measuring of the freshness of the fish is worth its weight in gold.

“We have been in contact with Hirtshals fish auction,” relates Alina Ciobanu, CEO and Strategic partnerships & customer acquisition of Fishent, “as well as Hanstholm and Gilleleje fish auctions. We got a very positive response, just as we had hoped for, and we were confirmed in our view that we have chosen the right way for our project. When I say “positive response”, I mean in relation to the value our product can create at the fish market, in Denmark and globally.”

A total of 33 new businesses presented their basic ideas and business plans at Spin Out Day in DTU Skylab. The categories were DTU Homegrown, Data and IoT Technology, Energy and Sustainability, Sensors and Diagnostics, Home and Health Technology and Process Technology.



Constructing the prototype.



A box of fish is placed on the plate under the sensors in the box.

### The Fishent team consists of:

[Alina Ciobanu](#) (CEO, Strategic partnerships & customer acquisition) - Computer Science and Engineering

[Teresa Steiner](#) (CFO, Finance & Sales) - Mathematical Modelling

[Louise Thorup](#) (CBO, Business development) - Design and Innovation

[Sean Meyer](#) (CTO, Software development) - Digital Media Engineering

[Sigur Klasson](#) (CPO, Branding & Product development) - Product development